

Camps. at Aptons hill. Virginia
Fort Ransom Decr: 23rd / 1862

Miss Deborah Weston!

My kind friend, it is
now three o'clock in the morning
I am on Guard duty take herewith the
Opportunity in Writing, to you, for I am all
most out the patience, to wait any longer of
a letter from you and Almira.

I am here in Virginia so far in a
perfect good health, and enjoy myself
during the Winter season first-right,
We got comfortable Winter Quarters, in having
our Houses under Shelter, and our Tent sheltered
a fire-places inside to keep us nice & Warm
five Men belong to a Tent, each of whom has
a bunk by themselves, made out of boards.
My bunk is eight foot long and three broad, it
is six inches above the Ground, so to leave room
for pulling the boots or Shoes under it, the
other bunks of the Men is one above me, what makes
two on each side. and the 3rd Man below in front of

I made a requisition for another Blanket
so as to have two in my possession to make me
a bed like a Gentlemen. I got some Oats
bags filled with hay, place the Blankets on
the top of them, so as to let them half under
me for Sheets, and the other half, for to cover me.
besides I got my big Over Coat and Goggles - Blanket
to lay on the top, this of course, goes and must make
a very Warm bed for me. — I feel quite content
in the Evening when bed time comes, by having
a fire near me, a Candle lit, a book or paper
to read, and feel joyfull when I crawl in to
have my thoughts fly like a Working Machine
of my time past, the present time, and the
future, the last thoughts on my Almira & Anna
in joining in the Evening - prayer; Whereby I
Shimmer away with dreams of my Friends and
Connections, with Love and plement, acceptable
Sentiments till to say Eight! —

Prevelly is at Seven o. Clock, every Man is to
get out to fall in for Roll - call, after this
the Drivers feed and clean their Horses, about
Eight o. Clock is breakfast, half past Eight Guard
mounting

from ten to twelve Kennoness-prill in
the fore, about twelve to one Dinner,
from two to four Kennoness-prill again, at
Sun-Get Roll-call, between five and
six Supper, the time past us very quick
Sometimes I take a Horse, and ride out in
the surrounding Contry. Fallschurch is about
one M^{ile} of from the Fort, I have been there twice
it is but a little Village with two Churches in
which are in a ruin Condition; one of them
is a brick Church, (they say) where George Washington
was married in, the Pulpit and sills are all
torn out of it, but there is now an Sentry in
to prevent further Outrages; The Wooden Church
has been used for a Horse-Stable; I found
plenty of Horse-manure in it. Some bricks
however on the road, which belong to Leitch or
Webbels, are torn down, and used for building
our Chimneys. - The troops which lay here
in Winter Quarters, and to defend Washington I
heard is 100,000 Men, under Maj-Gen. Flanitzelman
Upton's-hill where we are at present is the Head
Quarters of Brig-Gen. Kearney, who lives with Mr. Upton
in one house //

The 142nd. 143rd. 144th. and the 127th New York
Inf. Reg. are with us here on the hill in Company
placed by us in Minor's hill. Where Gen.
Borden (a Mass Gen) has got his Brigade & this
way lay all the troops around here towards Washington
divided in Brigades & Divisions. Our Gen. of Division
is Maj. Gen. Ambrose, for whom we had an
inspection last week near Munson's hill, this Gen.
praised us highly, he said our Battery was the
finest he ever had inspected under his command; —

^{inspecting} I believe our Battery is praised at least
of ~~inspecting~~ General. So that Gen. Halleck thinks
not to send us in the battle till to the last
necessity —

The health of the men in the Battery is at present
very good, but last month we had eight in the
Hospital, of whom one died in Emory Hospital
whose body is sent home to Lawrence Mass. Two
or three of them will get their discharge in a course
of a week.

However we lost one Girdner during our first
month's service — Sgt. Gould's too.

The weather is here very fine, it changes
of having sometimes a little snow, frost. then
fine days like with us in the Spring

Ms. A. 9. 2. 31. 34

P.S.

Dec. 23, 62

I must Oble to you now that
there is some Lady's which take great interest
of the 9th Irish Battery.

If you will not know whether I wrote
to you at Thanksgiving time, that
there was at the Fort a Lady by the
name of Mrs. Faile of Washington
which brought out for each man one Cigar one
Apple and Cakes - some Cloathing if any
one should get Sick; that was Thanksgiving
day - besides we had a Barrel of Cider -
which Capt - a French Gentleman who
stayed with us for his pleasure for a Month
in the Battery, and who has got now a Commission
as Aid de Camp to the Secretary of War (staying
(presented with Cider)

Yesterday afternoon we had our
Christmas Dinner, sent out by the same
Lady - Oh it was an excellent Dinner &
did eat so much that I can feel it yet
We had plenty Turkeys and Chickens.
Mince - pies. Cake & Crackers, Oysters with
Lobster, Cheese, Apples, of everything plenty

We had our Table set inside the
Foot of this Porch - The Limbs of the Table
and the Chairs in one line; Boards placed
on the Table enough that all the Men
had room to eat comfortably.

at four o'clock the Dinner was ready, the
Members of the Battery fell in and marched
to the Table. - I had my stand under
the Stars & Stripes and felt quite proud
The Ladies did not come out for they
had some business to tend in the City

But we had some other Ladies here to which
we and they to us smiled confidently

Well we had the use of this very
fine and good Dinner.

The best Thanks to the Ladies for
their Christmas Dinner as a Remembrance
of that day that Christ was
born, it is a great day in
Germany a great holy day which I
thought of in eating the Turkey

I must state to you also that the
Majority of the Members of the Battery were
discontented with Capt. de Veche, on account
that we did not get enough to eat in
Camp Chase Va. — Well it is true
that we some times had only half our Rations,
and some days to go without meat —
but I do not know if the Captain is
to blame for it — . Well he is Captain
and must look to the righteousness for his
Men, so that time they got a Paper
up to send to Gov. Andrew, to
ask for an investigation — They asked me
to put my name on to it, which I of course
did not. — I hear now that there was
a good deal written about the Captain
what I do not know — So last week
the Boston Herald — Sunday Herald arrived
here in Camp, wherein was published that
the Officers of the 9th Mass. Battery were
living on the Men's Rations, which our
Captain did not like //

*I shall write to Maria to say or to Mary; for if it is now seven o'clock, the time of seeing
the Genl.*

The report to the Secretary of War to resign
Mr. Stanton said Capt. De Veau is a Gentleman
(I can not discharge him) so I do not know when
will come next. / Your Paper which you have sent to me
I received two days after date / I am very sorry of the
Disaster at Fredericksburg / — I saw and spoke
some of the Wounded Officers, in coming to Washing-
ton, The day our troops were moved forward at
first they were put into action. They think that
our loss was 20,000 Men, in killing & Wounding,
I will and can not say, what Officers are responsible
for the overall, which was made upon the Enemy
Work — But I ask Why was so much time
given them in strengthening their places with Ser-
tises of Entrenchments. — We knew the
time that day as they were fighting — We listen
to hear the trumpet sound to have us fall
in to reinforce our Camerads — Our heart
was bleeding to do something for the Liberty of
this Country — But in Vain We remained in
our position in having that the Union Army was
overpowered

You hope that I shall not return home,
without having washed my hands in blood for Liberty,
so I close this letter with my love to Almira, my Anne,
to Mrs. Weston and to you all your friend J. Hester
of Carle